

The Electric Mercury

U.S. Army Medical Command Electronic News Summary, October 2000

For more on these and other important stories, see October 2000 printed issue of The Mercury.
This is a service of the Public Affairs Office, Headquarters MEDCOM.

TSG names CSM, lauds Total Army

New Army Surgeon General and MEDCOM Commander LTG James B. Peake uses his monthly column to announce that CSM Jim Aplin will be his command sergeant major and senior enlisted advisor. Experienced at Combat Support Hospital, MEDDAC and MEDCEN levels, Aplin was most recently at Brooke Army Medical Center and Great Plains Regional Medical Command. Peake also stresses the Reserve Components' role and relates what he observed in recent visits to National Guard and Reserve units.

USPHS doc is acting ASD/HA

Dr. J. Jarrett Clinton has been named acting assistant secretary of defense for health affairs. He replaces Dr. Sue Bailey, who is now director of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Clinton is a rear admiral in the commissioned corps of the U.S. Public Health Service. He got his medical degree at the University of Kansas Medical School and completed an internship at Gorgas Hospital in the Panama Canal Zone.

Medics help preserve peace in Kosovo

With color photos and colorful stories from participants, Wuerzburg MEDDAC public affairs officer Roger Teel describes how AMEDD people live and work in Kosovo and help people in that troubled province. From treating kids maimed by mines to rebuilding a school, medics make a difference while struggling to keep their own spirits up in often depressing circumstances. In sidebars, Teel relates the heartbreak of a medevac crew's unsuccessful yet heroic effort to save a drowned child and the hard work of the medics who maintain services in Wuerzburg while a third of their colleagues are in Kosovo.

DoD, VA review progress on ailments of Gulf War veterans

DoD and Veterans Affairs officials authored an editorial in the August *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, reviewing research on Gulf War ailments. Among findings: Gulf vets have reported higher rates of some symptoms, but their hospitalization rates, disease death rates, and rate of birth defects in their children do not exceed the norms found in non-Gulf vets. The article may be seen at <http://www.mayo.edu/proceedings>.

Other important stories in the October *Mercury* include:

- Army telemedicine and distance-learning initiatives, extending across the Pacific from Tripler Army Medical Center, earn finalist status in the Frank Brown Berry Prize contest sponsored by *U.S. Medicine* and Science Applications International Corporation.
- When soldiers from Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Bragg, N.C.; and Fort Campbell, Ky., went to western Montana this summer to fight wildfires, Army medics went with them. The medics trained by day and cared for aching, blistered firefighters by night. But they treasured the chance to train undistracted by special garrison duties and the chance to do something that made a difference in the real world.
- More than 130 Texas Army National Guard and Navy Reserve health-care providers treat 5,600 patients during Operation Lone Star 2000, a two-week exercise designed to bring medical and dental help to underserved residents of the Rio Grande border region.
- William Beaumont Army Medical Center is the test site for the Army Health and Wellness Program. Its leaders are developing ways to integrate the program with managed care and get primary-care providers excited about wellness. Throughout the hospital, innovations like ask-a-nurse phone lines, sharing agreements with the VA, robot pharmacy systems and new training software improve efficiency and customer service.
- Walking into the OD tent is like walking back in time....Inside, soldiers in World War II uniforms busily prepare for incoming wounded....from the minute they get on site and begin to set up, members of American Military Medical Impressions Inc., a living history display, assume the roles they play throughout....AMMI prides itself on being the only functional WWII field hospital of its kind. It has about 45 members from Maryland, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Texas.
- Photos show tour of Brooke Army Medical Center by senior People's Republic of China officers; maintenance of a National Guard UH-60Q medevac helicopter during a multinational exercise in Romania; research on mosquitoes at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences; and asbestos air monitoring in Kosovo.
- On our commentary page, *Mercury* editor Jerry Harben describes how the Army is working to improve quality of care but needs patients' own participation to ensure the best and most appropriate care. An accompanying article lists books and websites that patients can refer to for information on their conditions and treatments.
- U.S. soldiers are healthier than a decade ago, a medical survey finds, but have not hit Healthy People 2000 goals in several respects including alcohol and tobacco use, fat and salt consumption, and seatbelt use.

● U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine explains the nature and symptoms of depression, a widespread disease that costs America \$44 billion a year but that can be treated once it is properly recognized.